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International Protection of Cultural Property

Morning papers of the Symposium held October 17, 1980
Dedicated to Chester F. Gorman

In 1970 Unesco focused its attention on a problem that many nations of the world considered to be their single most pressing cultural concern: the great increase in looting of archaeological sites by commercial plunderers. The countries that appealed to Unesco asked for the establishment of a mechanism that would exert control on the international market in antiquities and ethnographic material as well as help to discourage local clandestine activity. In 1970, a Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property was adopted. Ten years later, 44 nations have ratified Unesco's Convention, indicating the continued importance and relevance of this issue in the parts of the world that originally called for action. But the effectiveness of the Convention has been limited by the fact that almost no art-importing nations have joined it. Of all the Westernized free-market countries, only Italy and Canada have responded, and these two countries' responses are no doubt partly the product of their concern about the loss of their own archaeological material.

In the first years following the establishment of this Convention, a leadership position was taken by the United States, where the Convention was ratified by the Senate. Since that time, however, the efforts to pass requisite domestic enabling legislation have flagged, and the tenor of discussions about the participation of the United States in this treaty has become one of increasing hostility.

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Looters' pits near Ban Chiang

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Today, the partisans who have worked with Congress toward establishing suitable enabling legislation are pessimistic that a workable response can be found.

With this in mind, IFAR felt it would be appropriate to review the basic premise that the world's archaeological heritage is seriously threatened by pillage, and convened a symposium on this subject on October 17, 1980. The papers reproduced in this issue of *Art Research News* are those presented at the morning session of this symposium, and deal with state of the problem as it affects archaeological and historical field research. The afternoon papers, which explore the legal ramifications and practical solutions to this problem, will be published in *Art Research News*, number 4 of the current volume.

The speakers whose papers are published here were invited to participate with several objectives in mind. Within the limitations of the short time allocated, we wished to represent fully and without bias the complex viewpoints and considerations to be taken into account in formulating a policy toward cultural heritage. At the same time, we wished to benefit from the experience and knowledge of distinguished specialists working in a broad range of different situations around the world. Thus we hoped to take account of varying personal experiences and perspectives in redefining the perameters of this issue. We also hoped to inform our audience of the state of the problem in different parts of the world two years after the looting of cultural property was identified as an international "crisis situation." It was taken for granted that all the speakers supported the principle that cultural property is a dear and valuable human asset, but that these specialists would differ in their approaches to the protection of cultural resources.

Another purpose was to counteract the dissention and accusations that have grown out of the legislative hearings on this subject. By bringing together a distinguished group of experts, and encouraging them to speak from their experience, we hoped to reveal areas of accommodation and mutual concern that might not otherwise have been apparent.

Finally, we sought to choose professionals who, while actively involved with questions relating to the Unesco effort, had not been strongly associated in the debate about U.S. implementing legislation, thus bringing fresh thought to the subject. After rereading the papers presented and considering the comments of those who attended the symposium, we believe these goals have been accomplished. The commentary contains a wealth of insight, a depth of experience, and a thoughtful consideration that cannot but be meaningful in advancing our understanding and response to the problems discussed here. We sincerely hope these papers will also contribute to an advancement toward the solution of the difficult problems we face in securing for the future our tangible human heritage. *Bonnie Burnham*

This symposium was organized in cooperation with the Explorers Club and was made possible in part by grants from the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation and the Jerome Levy Foundation.

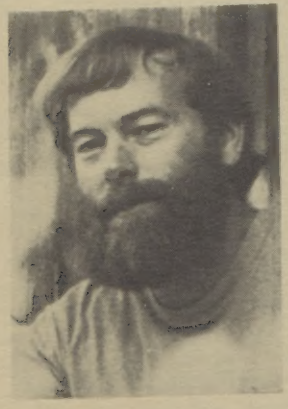
Dedication

Chester F. Gorman, the archaeologist whose fine paper on the excavation of Ban Chiang is published here, died June 9 of cancer, at the age of 43.

Dr. Gorman was trained at the University of Hawaii, and as a graduate student in archaeology he discovered the Spirit Cave in an early Bronze Age site in northern Thailand. In 1973, he began his work at the Ban Chiang excavation, which he co-directed on behalf of the University of Pennsylvania until the excavation's completion last year. Dr. Gorman is the author of several monographs on this important site. He also organized an exhibition on Ban Chiang which will be circulated next year by the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service.

Mr. Gorman's discoveries challenged the idea held previously that Southeast Asia was, in early times, a cultural backwater. His research established that farming and metallurgy were practiced in ancient Thailand a millenium before the Chinese developed these arts, and long before this stage of development was reached in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. According to Dr. Gorman's findings, the site at Ban Chiang is the earliest Bronze Age society to be discovered.

Dr. Gorman was Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and Associate Curator in charge of the South Asian Department at the University Museum. His career was distinguished by brilliant contributions to science and a passionate involvement with his profession. With the greatest respect for his exceptional accomplishments, IFAR is pleased to dedicate these papers in his memory.



Introduction

by William B. Macomber

It is a great privilege to welcome you all to this symposium. Its topic, The International Protection of Cultural Property, is of course of great interest to this distinguished array of curatorial, archaeological, and scholarly talent gathered here this morning.

It is also of great interest to The Metropolitan Museum of Art which, through its collecting of antiquities from all over the world and its major digs in Egypt and The Middle East, has been immersed in this subject from its beginnings over 100 years ago.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art and institutions like it have always been deeply involved in both the discovery and the preservation of the cultural patrimony of nations the world over.

Yet the phrase "cultural patrimony" has recently taken on controversial implications; it has come to imply, to some, the concept of "inviolable ownership" — which in turn has tended to cast a harsh light on the collecting activities of many institutions here and abroad. This means that any one who possesses works of art representing the cultural patrimony of other countries or other cultures — and particularly the great museums of the world — are now to some degree on the defensive.

I would therefore like to take advantage of being with you this morning to emphasize what is perhaps not always sufficiently emphasized in gatherings of this kind. And that is that The International Museum Community has played a principal role in preserving cultural patrimony.

We are not the enemy — as we are sometimes described not just by the art exporting countries but often in discussions of the nature you will be holding today. We are every bit as important in preserving cultural patrimony as the great zoos of the world are in protecting and preserving endangered species and educating people about the problem of conservation — and I would urge that this not be lost sight of.

On the other hand, the interests and prospectives of the great international museums are by no means the only ones to be considered. The interests of the countries of origin, and those who identify with these interests are of very great importance and must also be considered and respected. It is in this context that The Metropolitan Museum favors and supports the objectives of The Unesco Convention. I should add, however, that we are concerned that U.S. implementing legislation should not be drawn in such a way that it could unilaterally deprive the American people of their opportunity to collect and view the art of the past, while other importing countries remain free to proceed as they please.

In any event the basic point which I would urge that we all keep in mind is that both the countries of origin and the countries which have aided and continue to aid in the legitimate excavation and collection of cultural artifacts have cultural patrimony interests that should and can be protected. This is surely not an easy thing to achieve, and those who from whatever vantage point would over-simplify the issues involved will not be serving this important effort. I therefore sincerely hope that one of the accomplishments of this symposium will be to bring into clearer focus the complex issues which face all of us who are dedicated to preserving and studying the cultural patrimony of all nations.

William B. Macomber is President of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Perspective from Classical Archaeology

by R. Ross Holloway

I would like to begin with two anecdotes which I hope will place my talk in context:

In 1884 at Chiusi in central Italy the painter Alessandro François came across a tomb that had been plundered by clandestine diggers. From the discarded pottery left behind by the robbers there was reconstructed a black-figure Attic vase with band upon band of delicate mythological decoration which is now one of the great treasures of the Florence Archaeological Museum and known appropriately as the François Vase.

The setting of my second story is also Italy, this time Naples. On February 20th, 1977, armed robbers broke into the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. At gunpoint they looted the first room of the coin cabinet and made off with 6,338 gold and silver Roman coins in gunny sacks. This theft was particularly unfortunate because the Naples collection of Roman coins was composed in large part of coins from the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum — that is, of coins with archaeological provenience and, in the case of the more recent excavations, coins with detailed records of archaeological association. Happily, the criminals in this case were brought to justice, and early last summer about one-half of the coins were retrieved — perhaps others will follow. But it is more than a little unsettling to note that seventeen of the Naples coins, in the meantime, had been offered for sale in a catalogue of an eminently respectable Swiss auction house.

The moral of my two anecdotes is this. First, clandestine or commercial excavating is a pretty poor way to recover ancient art. It is not just a matter of losing the context, which doesn't seem to matter much to some; it is a matter of leaving behind or smashing up the treasures themselves. And think what the clandestine operatives, who dig for what the market wants, overlook. I have been on a site where such people had been grubbing away for pots or statuettes, serenely ignorant of the paleolithic material under their feet, which, in my opinion, was far more significant than the poor sanctuary they were gutting. Secondly, the traffic in illicit antiquities is crime, even if it's only smuggling and not armed robbery, and even if the laws are those of other people and not our own, or those of our immediate suppliers.

The purpose of my anecdotes is not merely to tell lurid stories, and I am not about to launch into a denunciation of collectors and collecting. Collectors and collecting have a noble history; they have given and continue to give shelter to the treasures of the past. It was collectors and collecting that built up the major museums of the world which constitute the reference library (one might even say "data base") from which much of the organized body of archaeological knowledge has been built up and against which new discoveries are measured, identified and interpreted. And there is hardly an archaeologist, I think, who has not at some time in his career had reason to be grateful to the knowledge and the generosity of the collector. However, I do bring the message that there have been changes in the roles that ancient art plays in modern consciousness and that these changes will surely affect collectors, collecting and museums.

Up to the late nineteenth century, the relics of other times and other places were either curiosities — a term I reserve for those things that we keep at a mental arm's length — or they were so familiar that they entered directly into the cultural milieu of the day. Renaissance Europe and the post-Renaissnace centuries were at one with classical antiquity, revering it as a model of taste and expression while recycling its monuments as building stone. The romantic distortion of the classical world lasted longer and even today we have not heard the last echoes of Walter Pater or of the Valhalla Hellenism of Kaiser Wilhelm. But serious scholarship on antiquity is no longer treating the Greek and Roman past as a comfortable residue of fondly remembered grandparents. More and more there is a desire to put the object in an historical or cultural context it cannot give itself. And this is so because we realize that that context even in our own classical past may be rather different from our own unaided assumptions about a given object and therefore necessary for its interpretation. To anyone who objects that, for a magnificient Greek vase, in the romantic words of Keats,

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty, —
> That is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye
> need to know,

let me answer with another story.

In 1958 I assisted in the excavation of a red-figure crater by the attic vase-painter Euthymedes — a painter contemporary to and no less important than the great Euphronios himself. The vase came to light in the part of Morgantina in central Sicily that was sacked in the Sicilian rebellion against the Greeks in 464 B.C. Because the vase came from a controlled excavation, I can tell you that it had been kept on the upper floor of the local tyrant's palace with a cupboard full of drinking cups, none of them decorated, making our crater very much the centerpiece of the service. The lower floor was occupied by a sweatshop textile industry.

During the sack, we discovered, these vessels were hurled out of the upper story into a neighboring alley. Again, because the vase came from a controlled excavation, we know more than the physical circumstance of its defenestration in 464. We know, or can guess, what it meant to its owner, the local strong man. The vase is decorated with a scene of a "symposium" or drinking party of the sort that the tyrant and his friends would have practiced in the name of culture. On the other side is a battle of Greeks, led by Herakles, fighting Amazons. Herakles in his travels had met and subdued the opposition in Sicily, and the tyrant must surely have seen himself in the role of Herakles policing the barbarians. Now every time I walk down the rows of Greek vases in our museums, for all their mythological decoration and inherent beauty, I wonder how much more any one of them would tell us if only we knew.

The interest in context — the full story, not just part of the story — has already shown itself among collectors. For example, it was an American collector who sponsored the excavations of the Minoan Palace of Kato Zakro in Crete in the 1960s, from which , I believe, he did not receive a single object. Today, the responsibility of interpretation, as carried out in our leading museums, has gone far beyond simple amassing of objects, and has also come a long way from the visitor's guide and the museum label that seemed to be written only for the other specialists and the visiting connoisseur. Cassette recordings guide the visitor, maps accompany displays, graphics support their interpretation, and now video tapes and even musical backgrounds heighten the effect,

placing an object, as much as possible, in its total context.

The museum was never, I hope, intended only as a temple and a warehouse; today, we enjoy it more as a modern lyceum and a theater. It has been the great loan expositions — another important recent innovation — that have exploited the drama and information content of the museum most fully. I believe that the immense popularity of these shows is proof that they have responded to the desires of their potential audience. For this reason, I am more than a little sad at the premium still placed on the big acquisition, the coup in the marketplace that seems so important to the careers and the amour propre of my museum colleagues. When large sums are publicized in connection with the acquisition of works of art from those places and periods in which the thieves and smugglers are most involved, the museum may appear, rightly or wrongly, in the eyes of the public here and abroad, to be extravagant and offensively highhanded. It has even been charged that museum officials secrete hot acquisitions in the vaults of their institutions for some future day when the notoriety of their display may be less uncomfortable. True or false, that such charges are made in public does not speak well of the general opinion of museum ethics either public or professional.

I believe and hope that this outlook and these practices, which I criticize and draw to your attention, are already in their last hour — not because of legislation, but because of contemporary consciousness. The next decades, I hope as well, will be bright ones for understanding and cooperation in the preservation of man's artistic past.

R. Ross Holloway is Director of the Center for Old World Archaeology and Art, Brown University, President of The International Center for Numismatic Research in Rome, and Past President of the Association for Field Archaeology.

Problems in the Preservation of Old World Antiquities

by Bernard V. Bothmer

When it was first proposed that this paper cover the problems of antiquities preservation for the entire ancient world, it seemed a hopeless task, in the time at my disposal, even to touch upon the majority of the difficulties concerning preservation in Greece and Rome, the Near East and Western Asia. I see, however, from the program that my distinguished colleague from Brown University will deal with the classical world, and therefore I feel that I don't have to refer to his territory more than in passing.

Although I have been to Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel and, as curator of a museum department covering all ancient art, am familiar with the situation concerning the antiquities in and from those countries, I would like to restrict the emphasis of my remarks to the Nile Valley — simply because the preservation problems there are greater than in any of the other countries mentioned before; they also have grown in the last 10 or 12 years at a more rapid pace than in any other country around the Mediterranean. Also, I have been intimately associated with monuments and antiquities of Egypt for some time and feel that its problems concerning preservation of national heritage are held in common with almost all other countries of the ancient world.

Actually we should not limit our concern to antiquities alone, but include the entire cultural heritage of a country, a nation, a people, in discussions such as ours today, because medieval monuments are just as much part of the life of a people as ancient ones, and for countries which have fairly recently emerged from the bondage of foreign domination — like Greece early in the last century — relics of recent times should be treasures as dear to a nation as antiquities. This in a perverse way has already been recognized in Egypt where possession of anything made before the rule of the Khedive Ismail — that is before 1863 — is forbidden by law, and antiquities and medieval treasures alike belong to the state.

Although the problems of preservation are manifold and, to a certain extent, vary somewhat from one region to the other, they seem to fall into three broad categories which in my opinion can be classified as follows:

Environmental: Pollution; Urbanization; People, especially tourists.

Governmental: Administration of culture; Choice and lack of qualified personnel; Education, national pride, and the absence of it.

Universal: Moral responsibility of preservation; The right of possession; The question of what laws should govern the transfer of objects from one part of the world to another.

Environmental

Pollution is indeed a great problem, but there is at least a general awareness of it all over the world because it affects human beings as well as antiquities, and humans are able to speak up and thus eventually bring forth a change in our conditions. Greece is more conscious of its environmental problems than, I believe, any other country bordering on the Mediterranean. In Egypt the use of chemicals in general and of fuel in particular is not yet so widespread as to affect the monuments, except in and around Cairo. Fortunately the Russian-built steel plant — the only one in the country, which belches forth black smoke day and night — lies at Helwan, south of Cairo, and is served by the prevailing north wind, which keeps Memphis, Saqqara, and Giza fairly dirt-free.

A much greater danger is urbanization. All last summer the newspapers were full of horror stories from Greece where at Toumba on the Island of Euboea, at Lerna in the Peloponnesus, and elsewhere, ancient buildings, even a temple, had been willfully — not accidentally – destroyed, sometimes even with government permits that had been mistakenly issued.

In Egypt I know of no case where a bulldozer has brought down an ancient building, but the encroachment upon antiquities sites is an irreversible process, which causes inestimable losses; intestimable because we shall never know what has been destroyed, since we have never seen the underlying material and studied it. This encroachment occurs partly through the hunger for more farmland and partly through the need for space for housing and industrial installations. In Upper Egypt most monuments are on or near the desert and are hardly endangered at present. But Lower Egypt — by far the

most populous region of the Nile Valley — has hundreds of antiquities sites (a site is called a *Kom* or a *Tell*, literally "mound," "hill," or "hillock" because it has risen, due to human habitations, tombs or sanctuary buildings, above the surrounding countryside). These are the places that are whittled away on the fringe and gradually gobbled up without prior excavation or even hasty examination.

As for tourism, it has become the first, second, or third largest earner of foreign exchange for many countries east of Portugal. To my knowledge it has not thus far posed a serious threat to the antiquities of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, or Libya. Turkey and Greece are having problems, although they seem to be able to cope with them. In Egypt, however, the danger has become very real in recent years. Not to the Pyramids of Giza or to the temples of Karnak and Luxor: they were built for eternity and will be able to take the onslaught of tourists for another century or more. No, what is truly endangered are the decorated tombs, primarily those of the New Kingdom at Thebes, which all year round are entered by thousands of tourists. The visitors touch the unprotected walls; they scrape off both relief and painting with their shoulder bags; and their very breath, carbon dioxide, causes destruction beyond repair. Since tourists want to see only the best known, finest, and most famous decorated tombs, it is these that are progressively ruined. To save them for posterity, they should be closed to all tourists as of now. Last summer, of the 62 tombs in the Valley of the Kings, only three were considered sound enough to be opened to the public. Even those should be restricted if we want them to be preserved for more than the next few decades.

Governmental

All of us who work in the field, who have gone out to the countries of our interest and specialization and who hope to go out again in the near or distant future are full of muted criticism — criticism because we often find that things are not done to suit us and muted because we are guests in these countries.

We have to work with them, we want to work with them, and we want to return and go on with the work for which cooperation and mutual respect are essential. We have our problems, and they have theirs; but since in research, excavation, and preservation (including collecting, which more and more becomes a vital form of preservation) we operate on their territory and not on our home ground, our criticism is necessarily directed at the people who administer their cultural heritage, which happens to be of burning interest to us — sometimes more than it is to them.

In several countries of the Old World, the major problem — indeed the stumbling block — that prevents better, more up-to-date, more imaginative and more effective preservation is the top man, the Director General of the Antiquities Service. He no longer keeps up with his field, he does not like new methods of administration, of accounting, conservation and so on, and in the face of his impending retirement he is unlikely to make sweeping changes or to introduce long-range projects which, in keeping with a modern world, would benefit the antiquities of his country in the decades to come. As a scholar he is prone to staff his top echelon with other academic specialists who are equally unable to cope with present-day problems, such as tourism and urbanization, and thus a system is perpetuated which takes little or no cognizance of the demands and problems of our times and, consequently, of preservation.

I also feel that the academic curricula in countries which require a large number of well-trained guard supervisors, site inspectors, local antiquities administrators, and museum curators do not instill in their civil servants a burning love and respect for the relics of the past, their past. Hardly any official of a country where the state claims ownership of all antiquities is what we call object-oriented. The larger the state apparatus and the more people it employs, the greater are the disdain, indifference and outright contempt toward everything owned by the state.

In Egypt, this development can be traced back to Nasser's revolution of 1952 and the type of socialism that ensued. Until 1952 Egypt had an aristocracy, a rich bourgeoisie, and an upper middle class with interest in the arts as well as in the antiquities of the country. There were, in addition, collectors and private scholars, and there was a tradition of owning fine things and displaying one's wealth, including works of art.

All this changed with the revolution, which was brought about by a group of high-minded, well-meaning officers of little education beyond the military arts, who had no interest in antiquities. As a matter of fact, they associated the ownership of antiquities, including that of Islamic artifacts, with the very classes they were going to wipe out. The great houses were closed and often looted, the vast estates of the pashas were sequestered, and private collections were confiscated unless their owners managed to take them abroad. Two entire generations have grown up in Egypt since, to whom antiquities mean as much as, and no more than, the pebbles in the desert. For them education has failed in one vital respect — it has failed to instill in them a love for, and a burning interest in, the relics of their national heritage.

By suppressing the so-called open private-sector market in antiquities on the one hand, and on the other, by not providing a public-sector organization to take care of the collecting and safe-guarding of antiquities, the governments of several countries are causing far more harm than they prevent. In these countries, no provisions are made whereby the lucky finder of an object of value can be adequately and swiftly rewarded; on the contrary, the possession of a found object constitutes a felony. This governmental insensitivity has had very grave consequences. It has generated a great loss of objects and the knowledge to be derived from them. This loss is felt by the local antiquities department and museum, by the archaeologist, by the interested layman, and by the historian.

To most poor people in countries where fear of the police and hostility toward the government are endemic, finding an object no longer constitutes a source of revenue; it has become a nuisance and even a danger. Consequently, more objects are discarded, reburied, or destroyed outright than in the past, and only an army of trained archaeologists stationed in every village, with collecting points established in every town, could save what at present is being irretrievably lost and destroyed.

The lack of trained personnel is partly due to an educational system that fails to instill a pride in the relics of the past in every new generation and partly due to the poor remuneration awarded to those who enter the career of antiquities officers or museum curators. Such positions traditionally are considered materially unproductive and therefore are thought to deserve a lower rating on the salary scale. Since tourism is a major source of revenue to many countries blessed with a mass of antiquities that people come to see, this revenue should go first to the care of the antiquities and to the salaries of the people who look after them. Instead, in most countries the revenue from culturally generated tourism goes into the general fund of the government, which in turn assigns its own national heritage a very low priority. After all, they seem to reason, the tourists are coming anyway, as long as the sites to be seen are open to all visitors.

Universal

This is the third category of problems concerning the preservation of Old World antiquities. It entails the moral responsibility we outsiders have, who are not citizens of the countries where most of the Old World antiquities are located — a moral responsibility to guard and preserve and to prevent the looting of antiquities, and to exercise our influence to the best of our ability, so that better measures are taken in the countries that possess antiquities.

Since man's cultural heritage is universal, our responsibility is just as great as that of the people who live in antiquities-studded countries, and it seems to me that it is not unreasonable even to think in terms of economic or political pressure in order to effect a better safeguarding of the relics of the past, which in a higher sense is ours as well as theirs.

I also think that it is dangerous to assume that the responsibilities of connoisseurship — including the discretionary powers to preserve or discard objects of the past, to display them or relegate them to storage forever after — should be vested in a civil servant who happens to have made his career in antiquities.

We all know in this country that we owe a treasure like the Cloisters here in New York not only to an inspired young curator, James Rorimer, but also to a highly knowledgeable dealer, Joseph Brummer, and to a great and generous connoisseur, Mr. Rockefeller. I am appalled when I see in some countries how people without a connoisseur's eye and a collector's burning interest administer a lot of antiquities as if it were a lot of used cars. Here too we have a responsibility to exercise our influence and to preserve, when necessary by purchase, the unwanted relics of the past, thus transferring them to a climate where they are better cared for and appreciated.

As for the laws that govern the import or export of antiquities, I must leave it to other speakers today to present us their position and to advise us of what might be best from a legal point of view. Let me just remind you that it is easy to make a law which forbids the collecting of antiquities; it is not so easy to forbid the soil of Old World countries from producing more antiquities year after year. It is up to all of us to preserve these antiquities, to collect them and to prevent their destruction.

Bernard V. Bothmer is Chairman of the Department of Egyptian and Classical Art at The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, N.Y., and Professor of Fine Arts, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

Collecting Pre-Columbian Art

by Gillett Griffin

I am a collector. In such a symposium I must, therefore, be a devil's advocate. Serious collecting started with me at the age of fourteen, with early New England children's books—children's books published in New England before 1846. A decade of collecting sensitized me to paper, type, the metamorphosis of printing and binding, the processes and styles of early American illustration. In art school at Yale I discovered and collected eighteenth-century Japanese prints at a time when we still smarted from the Pacific war. Through exploration of Oriental art I discovered that Sung ceramics could be afforded by an art student. It was in 1949 in a filthy junk shop window that I noticed and bought the first broken figurine from Mexico for 25 cents. I went to George Kubler to find out what it was. He thought that the figure was from the fourth century B.C. Fascinated, I audited his course that year and took it the next.

Collecting in the 1950s and 1960s was respected and never questioned. After all, all of us owe our intellectual heritage to museums and libraries which have garnered, saved and made available the patrimony of the art and culture of the world. I recognize that my own fascination with ancient art came from infrequent but vivid visits to museums during my childhood and youth. I was spellbound by the opportunity of confronting original ancient works of art — possessed as they are of a quality that pictures or reproductions cannot convey.

A dozen years after buying my first little Pre-Columbian figure I was able to travel for the first time to Mexico to see the sites from which had come such varied and fascinating cultures. I wanted to breathe the air, feel the wind and light and see the quality of the landscape of these people. I now have been teaching Pre-Columbian art at Princeton for a decade, using original works of art as much as possible. Through these my students share a first-hand experience with ancient and distant cultures which, I believe, is vivid and very real.

I am all for controlled and proper archaeology. I deplore looting. Yet looting exists and is almost impossible to stamp out. The most far-reaching way to curtail it is through education and encouragement of national pride. President Lopez Mateos created the

great National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. This has done more for Mexican national pride than any other single institution. The museum is crowded with people — most of them Indians from the provinces and school children. On the upper floor is displayed the modern ethnic life of the different regions; directly below are the archaeological finds and the ancient art of their ancestors.

Archaeological finds keep being discovered at a prodigious rate. Even Mexico, for instance, can't keep up with the numbers of sites in need of careful work; it can't afford to maintain what is already unearthed. Mexicans, like others, are jealous and even chauvinistic about letting outsiders work there. Archaeology and politics are one. Paul Tolstoy — a first-rate archaeologist — is typical of many foreigners eager to do archaeology there. He has been successful wherever he has worked, and because local archaeologists are jealous he has been denied permit to work in the places where he has been most productive. I believe that this material is international patrimony; it is not the possession of a few mestizo politicians. This I consider cultural immaturity. To be custodian of one's cultural patrimony is a serious responsibility.

Let me cite examples of this lack of stewardship. Along a highway in Quintana Roo I recall encountering Victor Segovia, a fine Mexican archaeologist. He was hopping mad: two Maya ruins declared National Monuments had been destroyed — one bulldozed for road fill, the other quarried for stone to build a new local jail. This had been done over his orders and in spite of telegrams to the governor, who had promised to back him up officially. At Palenque, to me the most beautiful Maya site in Mexico, the chief archaeologist in 1939 ordered that tons of stucco fallen from the exterior of the Temple of the Sun be dumped over a cliff into the jungle behind the North Group. No one is now alive who remembers where it was dumped. More recently the archaeologist Jorge Acosta, cleaning the west steps of the Palace, ordered a trench dug into which more tons of stucco were dumped. I saw and helped catalogue four large sacks of special pieces — glyphs, hands, ornament, etc. — saved by Mario León when he was curator of the site.

Yaxchilán is a Maya site reserved by the Mexican government for its own archaeologists. They appointed a man named Brüggemann as chief archaeologist. He erected a radio tower so that he could enjoy television in the jungle, roped off the airstrip, gave orders that no one be let into the site and felled a large tree directly onto the façade of one of the most important buildings. Word got out and he was promptly fired. But visiting Yaxchilán last June I was disturbed to see a large yellow earth-mover pushing quantities of earth and stone about the great plaza at a reckless rate. Yaxchilán's neighbor, Bonampak, boasts the most beautiful and complete mural cycle in the Maya world. Its frescoes rank with Renaissance frescoes or of those in Ajanta. Their discovery and publication changed our concept of the ancient Maya. The water-soaked building which housed them for over twelve hundred years has been purposely dehydrated over the last decade, imperilling the paintings. The frescoes should probably be removed. But the politics of archaeology in Mexico would let them disintegrate rather than permit an international team to undertake this project. A recent offer from the *National Geographic* to make a complete photographic record before further deterioration occurs was turned down. That is why I used the term chauvinism.

The Olmec site of La Venta was discovered in 1925. Excavations by Matthew Stirling in the late 1930s and early 1940s revealed the greatest concentration of monumental Olmec sculptures found at any site. These were threatened with destruction in the 1950s when petroleum was found there. Salvage archaeology moved the majority of the stones to the state capitol of Tabasco, Villahermosa, and set them up in a jungle park for tourists. Over the years the original honey-colored basalt sculptures have turned black and, in part due to the effects of petrochemical wastes in the atmosphere, have deteriorated seriously. (It should be noted that the stuccoes of Palenque, nearly a hundred miles away, are also turning black and are being eaten by acids borne by rain clouds.) But the real shock about Parque La Venta is the recarving of several monuments by the poet Carlos Pellicer. The most notable is the famous Stela 3, the "Uncle Sam" Stela. The face of "Uncle Sam" was re-carved twice or three times in a very crude manner — was it to please the tourists?

A site related to La Venta and but twenty miles away is Río Pesquero. In 1969 a young boy, while trying to obtain water from an area above a spring in a brackish river, lost a galvanized tub from his canoe. It sank. The boy couldn't swim and so his older cousin, fishing from a canoe, stripped, dove in, and swimming towards the tub saw something glint in the sun's rays on the sandy bottom. He pried up a life-size jade Olmec mask and, emerging wearing the mask, scared the boy nearly to death. The family dove for the next several days bringing up masks, celts, and other Olmec jade pieces. Word was sent to Jalapa — the state capitol of Veracruz. An Army colonel was appointed to oversee salvage operations. When the family had showed the colonel and his soldiers where and how to find the jades they were lined up on the river bank and machine gun bullets were sprayed over their heads. They were told never to go near the place again. In the next months estimates of some 1500 to 3000 stone celts, many of jade, some two dozen jade masks, and a number of smaller jade pieces were recovered. All found their way to the art market and out of Mexico. The original token-find and hundreds of celts are in the museum at Jalapa. The hundreds of other jade celts, mostly undecorated, have gone to forgers, who for the first time have a vast source of prime Olmec jade. The colonel, we assume, is living happily ever after — probably in Acapulco.

When Michael Coe dug the Olmec site of San Lorenzo he promised the villagers of Tenochtitlan that he would not take any stone monuments from them — only pottery fragments for study. After he left, the Mexican Government took some monumental stone pieces out. Several years later a woman from the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia y Historia, visiting San Lorenzo, noticed that a particularly fine monument was missing from where it had been placed in the schoolhouse. She asked where it was and the mayor, surprised, told her that she should know — a delegation from the National Museum in Mexico City had come with proper papers two weeks before and had taken it away. She was puzzled because she hadn't heard anything about taking it to Mexico City. When she got back she checked in the storerooms

of the Museum and asked around. She could find nothing. She wrote Michael Coe an alarmed letter. He immediately realised that it must be an inside job and that the monument might well already be on its way to Europe. He sent photographs, descriptions and measurements to museums and dealers throughout the world. Mysteriously, the piece re-appeared in the National Museum.

Teotihuacan, the most important city in ancient Mexico, had its face lifted for tourists in the 1960s. A new museum and sales-arcade was imposed on what had probably been the city's ancient marketplace. With the blessings of the Instituto, bulldozers ruthlessly pushed earth around to meet building schedules, crushing, among other things, a cache of spectacular 20-inch-long obsidian blades. The job was so well done that nothing ever could be salvaged by future archaeologists. Just recently an area to the south of the little museum, believed to be archaeologically sterile, was given over to the Club Mediterranée to build a hotel. It happens to lie in the dead center of the ancient city. Only salvage archaeology was permitted. Who will ever know the archaeological evidence destroyed in building that hotel.

Until the building of the new National Museum of Anthropology, few Mexicans saw their artistic Indian heritage as anything but an embarrassment. The first great Mexican collectors were artists, like Diego Rivera, who collected for political as well as aesthetic motives. Miguel Coverrubias, brilliant writer, caricaturist, painter, and anthropologist, collected passionately and inspired many others to do the same. Most of the people he inspired were foreigners — expatriates. He gave many of his pieces to the old National Museum, which had an Olmec Room he designed. One of his close friends was Frederick V. Field, an expatriate American. The two often went together on Saturdays to the brick factories at Tlatilco to buy ceramics and figurines that had been strained from the clay of the brickyards — materials which date back some 3000 years. Covarrubias had died before the new museum was built. Field — along with most collectors in Mexico — gave some of his most important pieces to the new museum when it opened. When Michael Coe met Field, he questioned him about a fine Olmec figure in the museum, given by Field and labeled as coming from Tlatilco. Field assured him that it had come from a reliable dealer who lived at the site and had vowed that it came from there. Michael Coe returned to Field with a catalogue from the old museum which featured a picture of the same jade figure in a place of honor in Covarrubias' Olmec Room: it had been dug up by Matthew Stirling at La Venta in the 1940s. No one at the Museum of Anthropology had noticed that such an important piece was missing or recognized it when it was returned.

Tlatilco was the site of a Formative period village whose dwellings were probably made of adobe. The rich deep clay deposits were ideal for bricks for a growing new city. Clay figurines, pots, stone implements and bones got in the way of the brickyard workers, who had to extract them. Although Covarrubias and others pleaded with the Government to excavate at Tlatilco, it was a long time before official excavations were instigated. Archaeological field notes of the time tell of finding several hundred roller seals in graves there. Many of these were apparently discarded by the chief archaeologist, others may have disappeared out the back door of the Museum; only a handful of those Tlatilco seals are in the Museum now.

One of the first Mexican collectors of Pre-Columbian art who was not a painter is Josué Saenz. Realizing that many works of art left the National Museum clandestinely, he determined to establish his own museum with ancient works of art of high quality. He offered to pay the highest prices and to buy fine works of art in foreign countries and bring them back to Mexico. At the time of the Olympic Games in Mexico he was asked to be the director of the "Cultural Olympics" — a campaign to bring artists of all sorts to Mexico to create a world cultural center. He organized an exhibition of national art treasures from participating countries — each country to be represented by one masterpiece. To represent the highest cultural achievement in ancient Mexico he selected a recent acquisition of his — a splendid Maya limestone throne-back composed of three seated figures. People agree that it was the most moving piece in the show. Afterwards, three men came to Dr. Saenz's home with a paper stating that because it was stolen property the piece was being confiscated by the Government. Enraged, Saenz wrote out two documents. One stated that the piece had been bought openly in the market, that it had no provenance and that it must be returned immediately. The other was a list of over one hundred items which had illegally left the National Museum during the past year and to whom they had been sold. This he threatened to release to the Mexican newspapers. His piece was returned immediately!

With the presidency of Luis Echeverria, the lid was clamped down on collecting. All Mexicans had to declare their collections of art — all art belonged to the nation. It was a time of confiscation, seizure, and intimidation, during which great quantities of art left Mexico, many collections were confiscated and many went underground. It is said that Echeverria has the largest collection of Pre-Columbian art in Mexico.

These actual details argue cultural immaturity — a serious lack of conscientious stewardship. I do not condone looting. At the same time I do not believe that by turning away we will set an example to anyone. Other nations have no intention of ratifying the UNESCO Convention. Our museums are outstanding; they have helped forge us into a nation that values culture because individuals have given collections which have enriched us. Our museums have every right to continue to grow — to be a deeper and richer source of multi-national cultures. To shackle them, to stop their growth amounts to insanity. Thomas Jefferson, who believed in encouraging the import of books into this country, helped to create the first Library of Congress with his own library. Jefferson also collected artifacts — his residence at Monticello became a virtual museum. He believed that public museums and libraries were vital to the assimilation and maintenance of national culture.

To stop the clock on the acquisition of world patrimony is to stifle or even strangle museums. It could be argued that there is sufficient material in museums in the northeast of the United States, yet how about the rest of the country? To stick one's head in the sand, ostrich-like, is unrealistic. Countries should strive for international cultural exchange. Architectural remains should not leave their country

of origin, for instance, but small portable works of art were traded in antiquity and, depending on their rarity or importance, should be exchangeable. Many of these were actually made for export.

Japan has, probably, the sanest antiquities-export laws because Japan has an intense national pride. There, scholars and experts are honored by appointment to cultural heritage committees — they are not paid. They are guardians of a sacred trust. Not one of them would dream of betraying that trust. National treasures are not exportable. Antiquities on the other hand are ranked according to specific rarity and cultural importance. Antique art may be owned, traded, and sold abroad, depending upon its uniqueness or importance to Japanese culture. Thus great Japanese art enriches many museums in the world but the best is treasured and appreciated in the Japanese homeland. Japan also assiduously collects ancient art from other places in the world, thereby enriching the Japanese people immeasurably.

Our country is an ethnic melting pot and all of the peoples who make up the face of America are entitled to see and study the heritage of their ancestors. This is especially true of the millions of Americans with a Latin background. Collectors have assembled and saved such international patrimony to the great benefit of our nation. As a museum curator I have acquired smaller items of great quality — avoiding monumental or architectural pieces. The Pre-Columbian art in The Art Museum at Princeton is of high quality and each piece exemplifies the particular culture it represents. It is a teaching collection in a teaching museum. Quality replaces monumental size.

By assembling such a collection, I feel that I have contributed to the educational capabilities of Princeton University without in any way making the slightest dent in the patrimony of any Latin American country. Rather, I feel that I have carried the aesthetic message of those great cultures into the consciousness of modern American civilization.

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A Case History: Ban Chiang

by Chester F. Gorman

I have been asked to present the case history of the looting and reconstruction of Ban Chiang, a major Southeast Asian archaeological site. The history is not old; Ban Chiang became known only during the middle 1960s, yet by 1972, five or six years later, no major undisturbed areas of the site were left intact. In spite of this, Ban Chiang provides some of the most interesting data for understanding of Asian prehistory, as well as a case history in the development of organized looting. It is not often that a site reveals totally unknown, yet advanced and innovative cultures, and there are few sites in the world that span six thousand years, from the late Stone Age through the beginning of the Historic Periods. Sites matching the size, richness, and preservation of Ban Chiang are rare. It is one kilometer long by one-half kilometer wide, and raises seven meters above the surrounding fields. It contains habitation layers and over fifteen thousand burials, many of them well- to lavishly-appointed. In many cases, even wood, fiber, and silk have been preserved over the last four to five thousand years. Ban Chiang is indeed a rare and beautiful site. Unfortunately, the ways in which it has been and is still being looted are common and in many ways grotesque.

Ban Chiang, both the current village and the archaeological site, is located on the northern basin of the Korat Plateau, a high rolling plain comprising northeastern Thailand. It was first listed as an archaeological site in 1960 by an inspector of the Thai Fine Arts Department, region 7. In 1966, the village was visited by Steven Young, an undergraduate student who was impressed by the antiquities he saw, and carried some vessels and shards back to his Thai hostess in Bangkok. His hostess, a wealthy, titled philanthropist and collector, at once appreciated the beauty and uniqueness, if not the scientific value, of the material. However, his hostess did have scientifically-minded friends, and one, Elizabeth Lyons, then with the Ford Foundation in Bangkok, arranged to have some of the shards dated by the thermoluminescence method at the University of Pennsylvania. The resulting fourth- and fifth-millenium BC dates were released in 1970, and were startling. The discovery was unique and spectacular in Asia; but in universal terms also, it was very old. During the late 1960s, the National Museum in Bangkok focused its attention on the site, and it was visited by a number of museum officials. Test excavations were carried out by the Thai Fine Arts Department in 1967, and again in 1972. In 1973, joint Thai Fine Arts Department and University of Pennsylvania excavations began, and they continued through 1976. From mid-1976 through this last summer (1980), we have reconstructed, analyzed, and computerized over 16 tons of Ban Chiang artifactual material. Several articles have appeared, and two books, as well as a monograph series, are in the final stages of preparation. Throughout our joint program, the elegance of the site has elicited efforts for similar elegance in excavation, analysis, and publication. Where our efforts have produced less than elegant results, the fault has been ours, and not the site's, even in its battered condition.

The Ban Chiang material has supported and greatly enhanced the view that Southeast Asia was an early and innovative center of cultural development. From what was considered a backward area, which advanced culturally only through borrowing from India or China — hence the name Indochina — Southeast Asia is now contributing data of fundamental importance to the study of the origins of domestication and the origins of metallurgy as they occurred throughout the world. We suggest that rice was domesticated in Southeast Asia, and that metallurgy in this area may also have been of indigenous origin.

What kinds of data are needed to generate — let alone prove — such hypotheses? (Hypotheses which, I might add, are opposite to all traditional archaeological reconstructions.) What we need are actual remains: the plant remains or their impressions, the actual metal artifacts, and the crucibles and molds used to make them. However, the mere artifacts, even when found and reconstructed, could date to almost any time period: no one doubts that rice and bronze were found in early Southeast Asia. The question is, were the technologies developed by Southeast Asians? Or were they acquired by Southeast Asians from foreign centers — centers of higher cultural development, such as India, China, or even the Near East? To answer these questions, we must have these artifacts

archaeological contexts. For:
a) the contexts denote associations;
b) contexts through associations denote age; and
c) the contexts through associations, which span time, delineate an archaeological sequence. Only by studying such sequences, often comparatively, can one hope to answer archaeology's most important questions: how did cultures emerge and develop in different parts of the world? How can such developments be explained? And what can be said of the nature of contacts between such cultures? In short, without excellent records, *there is no archaeology*. On huge, rich, multi-phased sites such as Ban Chiang, contextual relationships assume even greater importance. For without close stratigraphic control, the artifacts can float through several distinct phases, and through several thousands of years.

I will now turn to a short series of slides which illustrates the Ban Chiang sequence, first as a well-documented information sequence anchored firmly in context and sequence; and secondly, as an even greater wealth of looted and plundered information, floating in both space and time.

To reiterate, Ban Chiang is on the Korat Plateau in Northeastern Thailand. We have some 300 sites in a broad arc across the northern part of that plateau. The area is rich in mineral resources, and is very favorable for rice agriculture. The mound of Ban Chiang is about one kilometer long, half a kilometer wide, and seven meters above the surrounding paddies. In the center are the two excavations of the site: the first begun in 1974 and the second in 1975. The area of our 1975 excavations is long and narrow because it is dug under a road, one of the few areas left that had not been completely looted by the villagers.

The site is about four to five meters deep, and totally built up at this point on the debris of human occupation. It is separated into six very distinct and well-dated phases which go from the early Stone Age into the historic occupation.

Red-on-buff painted pottery from the upper layers is what first drew all the attention to Ban Chiang. This pottery was dated, incorrectly, by thermoluminescence to between 3500 and 4500 BC. We now know it to date much later than that, and to be associated with a very ordinary phase of Ban Chiang, the late Iron Age.

Down two phases from the phase associated with the red and white pottery were found a number of burials covered with pottery and containing many kinds of small finds — a wealth of cultural material. This phase dates from about 1600 to about 1200 BC; it has been called the Om Kaeo Phase because of the very diagnostic quality of all the pieces of pottery from this phase, which have never been found beneath nor above that phase. In a series of Om Kaeo burials from 1974, we found a wealth of bronze, and we expected to find bronze in 1975. I am going to focus now on the metals in order to show how important it is to have very good contextual information on such otherwise small and insignificant finds as objects of bronze. A typical burial in this phase contains a type of pottery — incised and painted red which is only found in this phase, and is highly diagnostic. We also found a very characteristic carinated white buff pottery, also diagnostic of this phase. A close-up shows two pots that were broken, along with many others, and spread over the corpses when they were buried some 1600 to 1200 years BC.

One burial in the phase, that of a small child, probably female, contained several pieces of jewelry. Visible are the lower jaw, upper arm, bracelets; lower arm, bracelet; upper right arm, bracelet; lower right arm, bracelet. In 1974, we uncovered considerable findings of bronze in these Om Kaeo Phase burials. What is unusual about this bronze is its association with iron, and a very unusual iron. The burial is no doubt that of a wealthy child, for her jewelry is iron. I will show you next the bracelet from the left arm. It is a beautiful cast bronze bracelet with small bosses, and around the outside, twisted and wrapped, is a piece of wrought iron. I think this exemplifies the bi-metallic tradition of this phase. Iron must just have appeared on the Korat Plateau. It is a very early date for iron, one of the earliest dates anywhere in the world for archaeologically-recovered iron. Iron was used by this culture as an ornamental metal. So in this phase, we have both good quality tin-bronzes, and the first appearance of terrestrial wrought iron.

Another finding of these excavations was several crucibles which have dross adhering to the inside. In addition, we found ovens, molds, and ingots; almost the whole repertoire of artifacts needed for the metallurgical technology. It is indeed rare to find these kinds of materials in close association in an archaeological site.

Here are pieces of two spearheads from Ban Chiang, both from the same phase, of cast iron with forged terrestrial iron blades, with cast-on bronze sockets. The first thing I did when I returned from Thailand in 1975 was to section these pieces and run analyses on them at our science labs at the University of Pennsylvania. There have been a few other bi-metallic pieces like this found in China, where they supposedly date to around 1000 BC; they are sometimes referred to as early Shang bi-metallic pieces. The Chinese pieces are all made from meteoritic iron. These Ban Chiang pieces, however, are made from forged terrestrial iron — a very different technology, and a very sophisticated one.

At the bottom of one of our squares, we came across a number of post-holes and a number of intercut burials. I want to call your attention to two important burials. They both contain crucial information, but in this case, some of their evidence has been lost at the site through disturbances. A small burial of a juvenile (burial 38) had been cut by a post-hole from above, but the feet are still intact on the far side. In the slide, you can see a leg bone, two leg bones, extending from the post hole, of about five inches diameter. The remainder of the skeleton extends from the opposite side of the hole; the head is on the other side. This is one of the most important early burials found.

I call your attention to some pieces right next to the post hole. There we found two very low-lying bronze anklets with the tibia and fibula still inside. The legs, which I showed you previously, are associated with another cranium from an *in situ* fully articulated burial dating to some time around 2500 BC.

I will now discuss a circular flexed burial (burial 76) found in a level beneath the previous skeleton. You can just make out the burial fill. I have half-sectioned the original burial cut. There is a beaker-shaped pot here and the cranium is just coming up. We only found these beakers and flexed burials near the bottom of the site. Under that

burial, under that cranium, we found a bronze spearhead near the hands of the skeleton. It is our lowest piece of bronze. From metallurgical analysis, we have shown it was cast, and that it was made from an alloy of 2.51% tin or thereabouts. A very low-tin bronze. What does that tell us?

At Ban Chiang, through our careful unravelling of the sequence with scientific excavation, we can demonstrate technological development in the metallurgical tradition. First we have the low tin-bronze spearpoint found in the flexed burial. Subsequently, the bronzes have a tin content of about 12% as found in the anklets noted for burial 38. Above these in the Om Kaeo phase a bi-metallic tradition appears with iron used as an ornamental metal, much as it was in Europe and Egypt when iron first appeared in those sequences. I have seen iron filagree inlaid into gold. The Chinese often made gold sheets to protect iron blades. Iron is very rare and very valuable. Here we have iron appearing much the same way in mainland Southeast Asia and at an earlier date than China or India and comparable with similar dates from the Old World. Are we dealing with an earlier development? Are we dealing with contacts? To answer these questions, we need the contexts and we need the sequences.

Finally, at the very bottom of the site, we found a number of burials associated with a very diverse and very beautiful black, burnished pottery. From its placement in our sequence, we know that it must have appeared in a metal-using phase.

In addition to a sequence of ceramics and metals, a scientific excavation produces information on more intangible aspects of ancient life, such as diet. Thus, a good stratified sample of all the dirt which we excavated — of which there were tons — was sent through a battery of machines, from which we extracted small animal remains and rice and other plant material. From the material caught in our sieves and taken from the site, from top to bottom, and working with a rice geneticist and a paleobiologist, we have been able to reconstruct the development of the domestication of rice over the last 6000 years on the Korat Plateau.

Now, I will show you what a village excavation looks like. When we first came into Ban Chiang, the villagers were digging under their houses and gardens. They soon found that they were paid the most money for particular kinds of pottery, and so they would send tunnels down, send these shafts down until they hit an area which was roughly at the depth of that phase, and then they would tunnel out. Here is one tunnel, going into a whole area of the black pottery phase.

Often pieces turn up, such as I am now showing you, not from Ban Chiang, but from other sites nearby. I am showing you a piece of the early black incised material, another type which I've never seen, with open-beaker form, resembling pieces from my second phase up. I can look at this material and have some idea of where it fits within the Ban Chiang sequence. But I have no idea of what went with it.

Three very nice pieces which I now show you were out for a collector to look at and a Thai student of mine took the pictures. With this group, he photographed two very beautifully made bronze bracelets. They came from a burial which evidently had bracelets and anklets and other very unusual bronze pieces, a very rich burial. I don't know what phase it was from, and I have no idea of what went with it.

I want to talk just a little about fakes. I have illustrations of Ban Chiang fakes that were made in the village right next to Ban Chiang, completely from scratch, but using the same clays. I have had neutron activation studies done at Brookhaven Laboratory on these pieces and on a series of all the local clays in the area. I can tell you that this was made locally. These pieces are made from the same clay, decorated with the same designs, and worked with the same material as the orginal pieces. Some fakes are made using an old original piece and attaching it with a resin to a new piece, which is then painted. Some of these pieces, which are half-old and half-new, are very hard to distinguish from the original.

In the photograph of these pieces, I draw your attention also to these beautiful bronze artifacts, and bits of bones, rollers, and beads, which just come in willy-nilly, to be sold.

Finally, here is a photograph showing the pigment that was used for the painting of some of the new pieces.

I have tried to show you what the site looked like when we excavated it carefully and cautiously. We have been able thus to discover a great deal about that prehistoric culture. The villagers on the other hand have looted the sites and made most of them almost useless for any type of modern, reasonably scientific excavation. What exactly started the villagers on the path to looting is one of the things that I want to talk about. After living on the mound for over 200 years, and after digging latrines and thousands of substantial postholes to support their houses, and after planting their trees and gardens, they most certainly knew what lay under the mound's surface. Yet they never systematically dug for the remains. The Thai test excavations of 1967 provided interesting if inconclusive results. Still, there was no major looting. Some local collectors and a few foreigners did visit Ban Chiang and acquired samples of the bronze and pottery. But this was nothing in view of what was to come. By 1970, the results of the thermoluminescence dates had been reported to Thailand, and rumors were passed about that the pottery had been dated between 3500 and 4600 years BC. As word of this passed to the Bangkok circle of collectors and dealers, many of them immediately organized Ban Chiang pottery market trips. Let us return now to 1970, and the first reported trip to Ban Chiang, made by the wealthy hostess of the young university student, Steven Young. She returned to Bangkok with over 100 vessels in her own car, and contracts to local villagers to dig and sell more. Other wealthy Thais joined the fashionable trek, and so collectors and antique dealers in Bangkok had access to Ban Chiang antiquities. For the poor subsistence farmers of Ban Chiang, all this attention was a blessing. They used their new income as many of us would have used it. Children went to better schools, and for longer periods of time. Real doctors were consulted for illnesses, and funds were put aside for a rainy day. . . the day when their supply of pots would be exhausted. Between 1970 and 1972 Ban Chiang was subjected to its most intensive looting. In 1972, the Thai Fine Arts Department petitioned the National Executive Council for Thailand to forbid excavations by the villagers. The Prime Minister pronounced it illegal to sell or to transport Ban Chiang material. In early 1972, His Majesty the King sponsored a small excavation in Ban Chiang, and later the Fine Arts Department opened a second Ban Chiang Excavation. This official presence and activity in Ban Chiang

slowed the illegal trade in antiquities. But in fact the villagers had just about exhausted the upper layers of the site. The Royal excavation was conducted on temple grounds. And the second excavation by the Thai Fine Arts Department was under a road, the same as ours would later be. These were the only undisturbed surfaces remaining. Faced with an official presence, and a rapidly dwindling supply of pots, the Ban Chiang villagers had two options: first, to fan out and prospect for antiquities under other mound villages nearby; or two, to manufacture fakes and sell them as the real thing. They of course chose both. There were many such mounds around Ban Chiang, and with their experience, the Ban Chiang villagers soon located most of the nearby sites. At first, the material was transported to Ban Chiang for sale as genuine Ban Chiang artifacts. But soon, it became apparent that collectors and dealers were as interested in the new sites as they were in Ban Chiang. They were then escorted to these new sites, and villagers and dealers in the surrounding area were sensitized to a new reality. Other villagers began mining their own mounds, and dealers and collectors scoured practically every village within a 100 km radius of Ban Chiang.

Thai and foreign society figures were split in their reactions. Some offered money to have the sites properly excavated. Others used their status and fortunes to destroy totally some of the most important sites on the Korat Plateau. One small site I visited in 1975 had been trenched through the middle by a Thai collector: black ceramics and quantities of bone and bronze littered the surface. It was the earliest Ban Chiang type yet seen. For security reasons involving looters we were unable to excavate the remains and a year later it too was completely plundered. In the last five years of survey no unlooted site has been located.

The *market* for Ban Chiang material set in motion the systematic plundering of the sites, and it continues. The high social status and/or relatively immense wealth of many collectors puts them above the law and they operate their own "excavations." Dealers offer poverty-stricken farmers a relative fortune for otherwise meaningless pots long buried and forgotten under village houses and gardens.

What sanctions can one invoke against a victimless crime — a crime in which everyone gains except the discipline of archaeology and ultimately the countries whose cultural heritage is dismembered and strewn across the world? Whatever those sanctions are, the Ban Chiang case clearly indicates they should be directed against collectors and dealers. For as they created the market for antiquities, so they insure the destruction of the Ban Chiang related ancient sites.

Chester F. Gorman was Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and Associate Curator in charge of the University Museum's South and Southeast Asia section until his death in June 1981. This paper has been edited by Joyce White, a PhD student of Dr. Gorman's with assistance from Deborah Wong, a work study student with the Ban Chiang project. Continued analysis and final publication will now be under the direction of Dr. Charles Higham of the University of Otago, New Zealand. An exhibition and catalogue of Ban Chiang artifacts, initiated by Dr. Gorman under sponsorship of the University Museum and the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service, is scheduled to open at the University Museum during 1982-83 and will travel to seven other locations in the United States before returning to Thailand. In any forthcoming publications, the chronology and data of Ban Chiang may be somewhat revised; however, these revisions will not fundamentally alter the significance of this site to world prehistory, nor Dr. Gorman's comments on the destructive impact of looting on the search for knowledge of our past.

New Challenges To Africa's Artistic Heritage

by Arnold Rubin

For a total of about four years between 1964 and 1966, and between 1969 and 1971, I was engaged in art historical field-research in the Benue River Valley area of northeastern Nigeria. My work was in the nature of a survey, essentially an attempt to trace the distribution of types and styles of sculpture at that time little known to Western scholars. These two periods of research coincided with the beginning and end of the Biafran conflict. For students of the traditional arts of Africa, I believe they bracket something of a watershed in the matters which concern us here today, ushering in a completely new set of economic, social, and cultural circumstances. For my purposes, it meant that much of the art I had gone back to Nigeria to study in 1969 was no longer there. It was in Paris or London or New York. Here is one of several examples I could cite: in 1966 I had sought unsuccessfully to purchase one particular Jukun sculpture for the Department of Antiquities of Nigeria. By 1969 the sculpture in question was in a French private collection. In my opinion, it is the key monument of an entire regional tradition. If it had to leave its village, it should have entered the Nigerian Museum. I say this without a great deal of enthusiasm, incidentally, for reasons which will emerge a bit later.

Insofar as I can reconstruct the sequence of events involved, the figure had been secretly sold by its custodian, who claimed that it had been stolen. Along with hundreds of other works of Nigerian art, it apparently had been smuggled out of Nigeria via Cameroun. In Nigeria during the late 1960s, all available manpower was being poured into the war, and the country's control of its long boundary had deteriorated. Dealer-friends tell me that the African art market was actually depressed for a period of about two years in the early 1970s because of an avalanche of first-rate and absurdly inexpensive material — which, however, "hooked" a vast new pool of collectors, dealers, and investors. The result has been a steady rise in demand — and prices — since then, and a consequent increase in the suction operating on Africa's traditional art.

It will have become apparent that I propose to present a highly personal perspective on the subject of this symposium as the basis for some generalizations. I won't be talking about

archaeological sites or the works in stone, clay or bronze they yield — these are not issues in the Benue River Valley, although they are elsewhere in Nigeria and Africa. Nor will I be talking much about outright thievery, which any civilized person must deplore; but some of that has been reported, too. My personal involvements and concerns with the international protection of cultural property are frankly pragmatic and necessarily reactive, and they are oriented toward the living heritage of traditional African art — toward masquerades still being performed, toward shrines still in use, toward rituals still being carried out.

I perceive that these involvements and concerns can be divided into three intersecting domains: the scholarly, the aesthetic, and the ethical or humanistic. First, as an academic art historian specializing in sub-Saharan Africa, I am professionally anxious about the survival of the objects which constitute basic data for myself, my students, and my colleagues — and, equally, about the linkages of those objects with contextual information about their provenance, use, and meaning. Sever those links and the value of the data is drastically reduced. As a professional, I published a letter in the College Art Association Journal about 10 years ago, in response to an article by Clemency Coggins documenting the pillage of Maya sites. I pointed out that Africa's artistic heritage was also being eroded through uncontrolled export of antiquities, including objects made fairly recently for traditional uses. Last May, as an academic delegate to our regional organization, The Art Historians of Southern California, I endorsed a resolution supporting passage without amendment of H.R. 3403, the bill to implement the Unesco Convention on the preservation of cultural property.

Second, I respond to the aesthetic qualities of African art. I would describe myself as formerly, in a small way, a collector. Past tense because, by the mid-seventies, in order of increasing importance, (1) I was priced out of the market; (2) the proliferation of works available induced a certain numbness; and (3) because feeling or knowing something about the historical and cultural entanglements of a work of African art came to be more meaningful than experiencing its formal qualities. Works of art have become primarily, for me, cultural relics, not unlike the body-parts of powerful people preserved in the shrines of several of the world's religions. I am reinforced in these analogies by the writings of Marcel Griaule, the French ethnologist, about Dogon conceptualizations of their funerary masquerades. Among the Dogon, according to Griaule, red fibres were associated with a sequence of transgressions against morality and social order which began at the time of creation. Through contact with menstrual blood and putrefaction, in particular, they came to be imbued with the essence of a terrible pollution, which eventually brought death to the world of mankind. To protect the community against retribution by the souls of enemies killed in war and animals killed in the hunt, Dogon men danced in skirts and fringes made of these same red fibres, together with carved wooden masks representing the detached, malevolent souls. These dances, in the nature of highly stylized mock-battles, were thought to be effective in driving out the souls and guiding them to a place of repose where, according to Griaule, all tribulation ceased. But soon, the masqueraders "betook themselves to the public square to enhance aesthetically their religious actions." Although these embellished performances still pacified the alienated souls and protected the living, there were dire consequences for the people:

"For these spectacular ceremonies excited their curiosity and their envy. Some of them took masks and fibre costumes for their own use. Others, thinking that they were precious objects, hid them in holes in the rocks. Still others, seeing the object which had caused the rites, bought a body to have a reason for sculpturing, painting, and showing themselves in the public square. But the masks and fibres, being funeral material, transmitted their impurities to those who wore them and death, winning over one region after another, spread throughout the Dogon world."

What happens when an object which sanctions such crucial political, religious, or social functions is removed from a community? Consider the Jukun sculpture with which I began these remarks: the village from which it was taken is now deserted, following a period of civil disorder. According to my information, removal of the sculpture was a major cause of the destruction of this community.

While the owners or custodians of works of art may, under certain circumstances, agree to part with them, they often express puzzlement at what possible use outsiders might have for things so intimately bound up with the identity and collective experience of another people. In other words, deprived of their social and cultural fundament, the formal appeal as well as the functional roots of such objects are perceived as withering away. As an even more important consideration, illustrated by the Dogon example, such objects will also be regarded as almost certainly hazardous to an outsider who is, by definition, ignorant of their proper use.

On another level, however, experiencing the actual artifact can be compared to building a bridge, tangible yet mystical, across the miles and years, literally getting in touch with people whose ways of life were vastly different from ours. Perhaps it is useful to compare such objects to letters in languages one is unable to read; appreciating the calligraphy cannot be considered an adequate response. Nor is it easy to understand when and how such cultural value gets translated into commodity value. In Africa, field workers often get very peculiar looks on asking questions about ownership of what we would call works of art. Being fabricated of wood or earth or other impermanent materials, most works of African art in traditional contexts are not regarded as intrinsically valuable — except perhaps for the cloth or beads or metal ornaments attached to them. Rather, they are collectively owned, and their value could only be conceived and expressed in social and cultural terms.

Which brings us to the last of the three domains of involvement and concern I mentioned earlier; first the scholarly, then the aesthetic, now finally the ethical or humanistic.

Paul Bohannan's 1979 presidential address to the American Anthropological Association was recently published under the title "You Can't Do Nothing". Among other things, it focused on the complex responsibilities of scholars in the social and human sciences for constructive action in struggles for cultural and physical survival currently going on around the world. I sense that for most

of us, Bohannan's statement, "You Can't Do Nothing," might better be posed as a question, "Can You Do Anything?" Specifically, in terms of protecting the cultural heritage of Third World peoples, most arguments for continuing the present laissez-faire conditions of international commerce strike me as transparently self-serving, as attempts to rationalize particularly odious forms of colonialist or neo-colonialist exploitation. Having worked out this position, I was, however, deeply shaken when I first encountered the following system of propositions:
that the *huaqueros* — pot-hunters — in looting ancient sites, were simply recovering the economic surplus invested by their ancestors;
that the archaeologists, art historians and other (mostly expatriate) preservationists were, in the last analysis, looking after their own interests — sites to dig, treasures to discover, books and articles to write, leading to grants and fellowships, academic positions and promotions, and other rewards and honors;
and that, for the impoverished peasants on whose lands the discoveries in question were made, participation in the glorious work of recovering and preserving the past didn't patch the roof, buy the sewing machine, pay tuition, or otherwise gain a better life for the present.

Objections to this unconventional analysis include the fact that such impoverished peasants are the thin bottom layer of a very large commercial pyramid, with many layers of middlemen, by no means impoverished, each taking their cut; and that, being without information about ultimate value or direct access to the art market, our hypothetical impoverished peasants realize only a miniscule fraction of the value of their finds. In any case, the people who made and used the objects in question have long since vanished and obviously cannot figure in discussions of ownership and disposition. Such fine legal points are not relevant to discussions of artifacts deriving from the functioning societies of contemporary sub-Saharan Africa, however. According to any reasonable definition, we are dealing with the owners, and they are being swindled. Parties to this commerce, at every step and stage, cannot escape culpability. A central consideration, in my opinion, is that loss of key objects can precipitate drastic, even tragic changes in the life of a community — particularly those which don't have much in the first place. As noted earlier, the carving with which I began this discussion was associated with just such a pattern of consequences.

In this sector of their lives, then, as part of a much wider pattern, previously independent people are losing control, becoming subject to economic forces generated and decisions made hundreds or thousands of miles from their villages. Moreover, the flourishing trade in archaeological and ethnographical art is clearly a matter of demand pull rather than supply push. I know of no campaign by Nigerians or Papuans or Guatemalans to develop a market for their traditional art among Germans, Americans, or Japanese.

The myth of "Darkest Africa", of Africa as a cultural and historical vacuum, is an essential premise for this kind of exploitation, and it dies hard. For five hundred or a thousand years, or longer, contact with Europeans and other outsiders regularly brought cultural pressures and new cultural forms to sub-Saharan Africa, but there was time for adjustment and incorporation. Even where missionaries sought to exterminate traditional belief systems by destroying the objects in which they were invested, their actual impact was comparatively small. The scale and pace of such challenges to traditional systems began to change in the last half of the nineteenth century, however. European commerce with the peoples of Africa moved toward national monopolies, ultimately ratified through the establishment of colonial empires. Political and economic hegemony quickly came to include a cultural dimension. Of the ethnographical museums which emerged about this time, the Commercial Museum in Philadelphia was more straightforward than most in declaring its objectives and priorities. According to the introduction to the museum's African handbook, "During the initial history of the Commercial Museum, the acquisition of ethnological materials was considered incidental to the task of collecting the tremendous quantities of commercial raw materials to be obtained from international expositions, museums, travellers, and other sources." The primary objective of these incidental ethnographical collections was, in fact, to provide models for local manufacturers. In themselves, the specimens had only infinitesimal economic value, being primarily of interest to the emerging fields of social science rather than to connoisseurs. (As a stunning anachronism, many of the great works of so-called primitive art are still to be found between the seashells and stuffed animals in Natural History museums.)

Two events seem to have been pivotal in changing this pattern. The first of these was the raid carried out by the English against the Kingdom of Benin, in Nigeria, in 1897. Overwhelmingly outgunned, the Bini were defeated and their city taken; the palace was looted and the royal treasury, carried off as booty, was auctioned to defray the expenses of the campaign. In keeping with the emergent ideology of Black African inferiority, the first order of business was to determine the real genesis of these extraordinary works in bronze and ivory — Ancient Egypt? the Islamic World? a transplanted Portuguese? Slowly, inexorably, these racist explanations have been beaten back by irrefutable archaeological evidence for Black African origin.

The second element in this shift was, of course, the discovery and exploitation of African sculpture by advanced French and German artists in the early years of the twentieth century. A limited and highly specialized market for the original materials upon which these experiments were based began slowly to build until the dramatic expansion of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which I discussed earlier. This trend converged in a very interesting way with the African colonies' surge toward independence, which reached a crescendo in the early 1960s. In most cases — certainly true of Nigeria — the leaders of these new nations were faced with twin challenges: on the one hand, the problem of uniting ethnically diverse populations into functioning political and social units; and, on the other, of claiming their rightful place as culturally consequential among the nations of the world.

The idea of recovering or forging a shared historical and cultural heritage emerged as a major tool in this regard, and museum services and cultural agencies were established or expended all across Africa. Some other countries adopted the alternative strategy of

attempting to force nationhood by wiping out all vestiges of the traditional past. Still others, more passively, did little one way or the other, which also had the effect of accelerating the breakdown of traditional patterns. For example, I spoke earlier about Cameroun as a conduit for the illegal exportation of Nigerian antiquities. A great deal of Camerounian art came out via the same route at the same time.

A shift of focus is necessary at this point. There is an African proverb which translates, approximately, "when elephants fight, it is the grass which suffers." Its relevance to the matters being discussed here is as follows: Regarding their artistic heritage, people in the villages must contend with the pressures of an overheated international market on the one hand, and of government policies on the other, acting against the subtle and complex magnetism exerted by the traditional functions for which the objects were originally intended. The results of the extermination strategy I mentioned above, or of the absence of any systematic policy, are self-evident: objects leave the village. Where protection and preservation are the avowed objectives, and statutes and an infrastructure exist, the situation is still complicated. Representatives of the national government tell the villagers that it is their civic duty to preserve and maintain their antiquities but typically provide little or no assistance to them in doing so. What if, in situations of cultural flux, bonds are loosened — perhaps temporarily — and such preservation and maintainance is not feasible? Answer: the works in question should be sold (or given) to the national museum, usually for a fraction of what they would bring from the scavengers and speculators who abound in even the most remote locations. Once again, the problem of preserving the past comes into conflict with patching the roof, buying the sewing machine, paying tuition, and otherwise gaining a better life for the present. In either case, whether conveyed to the national museum or a Madison Avenue gallery, objects leave the village.

Nor are prospects for the survival of still-viable traditions very reassuring. Local constituencies and traditional contexts for the arts — the source, I believe, of their special vitality and integrity — have been largely replaced by national and international ones. Under the auspices of national cultural agencies, cultural competitions — "festivals" — at all administrative levels pit dancers, musicians, and masqueraders against one another, with winners moving up to the next level. Links between form and content have been broken, the sacred has become secular, and performance values take precedence in the struggle for a place in the national consciousness. People see what wins, and go home to make the changes which they believe will improve their chances in next year's competition. Innovation — no longer counterbalanced by tradition — becomes a primary criterion of accomplishment.

Many of the same pressures are operative in the international sphere. Programmed to respond to departures from the norm, European collectors and entrepreneurs have stimulated the appearance, in a number of traditions, of what can only be described as monstrosities. The formulae involved are, in turn, feeding back into the few works still being made for traditional use. For the most part, however, the standardized products of mass production, in one form or another, take over in these domains.

In concluding, I will return to the highly personal perspective which I adopted at the outset. You now know something of the social and economic — not to say ethical — framework in which this particular Africanist is constrained to operate. One key point remains: the charge that contemporary scholarship oriented toward the peoples of Africa, Oceania, and Native America is patently self-serving, and amounts to another form of exploitation. In responding to this charge, I can begin by saying that I feel no personal guilt over what has gone before. Rather, I am concerned with developing appropriate responses to the information and perspectives I now control, responses for which I am prepared to be held accountable. I have moved to resolve these professional and personal responsibilities in the following ways.

On returning to Los Angeles from Nigeria in 1971, I embarked with a group of students on a continuing study of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses. We sought to bring home the methods and perspectives developed to deal with the arts of Africa, Oceania, and Native America and apply them to a phenomenon in our culture which is in many fundamental respects similar to those one would encounter in Nigeria or New Guinea. More recently, I have begun work on a comprehensive, cross cultural exhibition of the ways human beings have modified their bodies for aesthetic purposes. The show, which will be almost entirely photographic, is scheduled for presentation at UCLA and elsewhere in 1983.

I realize the challenges which studies of floral floats and tattoos are likely to pose to present-day Western tastes and sensibilities. Nevertheless, I perceive and intend my investigations to be a logical progression, and perhaps even a vindication, of my research in Africa. But I confess that these solutions leave me dissatisfied and perplexed, and don't really respond to the issues to which the present symposium is addressed. In the last analysis, a friend of Africa is left with the essential premise of the Hippocratic oath: If you can't do any good, at least don't do any harm.

Note: The Griaule quotations are from his Folk Art of Black Africa, New York, 1950. For Bohannan's address to the American Anthropological Association, see American Anthropologist, vol. 82 no. 3 (Sept. 1980). A report on my Tournament of Roses research is included in Justine M. Cordwell (ed.), The Visual Arts: Plastic and Graphic (Proceedings of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences), New York, 1979.

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